

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

OES-03 SAJ-01 EA-07 EB-07 /078 W

----- 048768

R 041745Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5563

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T ROME 1924

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, AL, IT

SUBJECT: ALBANIA

1. DURING A CONVERSATION WITH AN EMBOFF FEBRUARY 4, THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR TO TIRANA DESCRIBED THE SITUATION IN ALBANIA AS GETTING WORSE AND WORSE AND STATED THAT THE COUNTRY HAS THE SEMBLANCE OF A CONCENTRATION CAMP. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE ATMOSPHERE HAS BEEN SO POISONED BY THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE BUREAUCRATS THAT IT IS EXCEEDINGLY DANGEROUS FOR AN ALBANIAN CITIZEN EVEN TO EXCHANGE GREETINGS OF THE DAY WITH A FOREIGNER.

2. AS A RESULT OF THE PURGES, THE AMBASSADOR REPORTED THAT THE RULING ELITE HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED IN NUMBER AND IS OBLIGED TO RESORT TO FEAR TACTICS TO PRESERVE ITS POSITION. AT THE SAME TIME, PARTY SECRETARY ENVER HOXHA IS IN FAILING HEALTH, AND THE AMBASSADOR DOUBTS THAT HE WILL BE ON THE SCENE MUCH LONGER. (THE AMBASSADOR REPORTED SEEING WITHIN THE PAST YEAR OR SO A MEDICAL DOSSIER ON HOXHA PREPARED BY A TEAM OF FRENCH DOCTORS WHO HAD EXAMINED HIM IN TIRANA. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, HOXHA IS SUFFERING FROM ADVANCED DIABETES AND A DEBILITATING CIRCULATORY PROBLEM.) THE AMBASSADOR REPORTS THAT PRIME MINISTER SHEHU IS ALSO NOT IN THE BEST OF HEALTH, BUT HE STATED THAT HIS SITUATION IS NOT AS SERIOUS AS THAT OF HOXHA. A THIRD

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MEMBER OF THE LEADERSHIP WHO IS ILL, ACCORDING TO THE AMBASSADOR,

IS PARTY IDEOLOGUE KAPO. THE AMBASSADOR REPORTED THAT KAPO HAS TRAVELED TO FRANCE FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT.

3. THE AMBASSADOR REPORTS THAT A STATE OF PARANOIA EXISTS IN ALBANIA TODAY. BOMB SHELTERS AND BUNKERS ARE BEING ERECTED ALONG THE ADRIATIC COAST ALONG THE BORDER WITH YUGOSLAVIA, AS WELL AS ALONG MAJOR HIGHWAYS AND IN URBAN AREAS. FOREIGN AMBASSADORS, INCLUDING THE ITALIAN, WERE ASKED TO ERECT BOMB SHELTERS IN THEIR EMBASSY COMPOUNDS. (THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR REFUSED.) PERHAPS REFLECTING THIS MILITARY CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY, THE ALBANIANS HAVE CEASED, ACCORDING TO THE AMBASSADOR, EXPORTING CEMENT TO POLAND AND INSTEAD ARE IMPORTING IT FROM ABROAD. ANOTHER POSSIBLE SIGN OF THE ALBANIAN FEAR OF OUTSIDE AGGRESSION IS THE FACT THAT DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER NUSHI ASKED THE AMBASSADOR IN DECEMBER WHETHER NATO WOULD INTERVENE IF YUGOSLAVIA WERE INVADED BY WARSAW PACT FORCES. (A WEEK LATER THE YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR ASKED THE AMBASSADOR WHETHER NATO WOULD INTERVENE IF ALBANIA WERE ATTACKED*)

4. CONCERNING THE NEWCOMERS IN THE BUREAUCRACY, THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THEY ALL SEEM TO COME FROM THE PARTY APPARATUS, AND HE ASSUMES THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SELECTED BECAUSE OF THEIR FIDELITY TO THE HOXHA-SHEHU CLIQUE. HE SINGLED OUT PALI MISKA AND LLAMBI GEGPRIFTI AS POSSIBLE "COMERS" IN THE NEW GROUP, ALL OF WHOM ARE IN THEIR LATE FORTIES OR EARLY FIFTIES.

5. THE AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED YUGOSLAV-ALBANIAN RELATIONS AS DETERIORATING. HE WAS UNSUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING AN EXPLANATION FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT DURING HIS RECENT CONVERSATION WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER NUSHI.

6. THE AMBASSADOR SEES NO MAJOR PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF CHINESE-ALBANIAN RELATIONS. HE ASSUMES THAT THE ALBANIANS ASK FOR MORE FROM THE CHINESE THAN THEY RECEIVE IN TERMS OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR IMPLIED THIS IS TRUE WHEN HE STATED THAT HIS COUNTRY ASSISTS ALBANIA TO THE EXTENT IT CAN BUT IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT CHINA HAS WORLDWIDE COMMITMENTS IT MUST FULFILL AND THAT IT IS A DEVELOPING
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COUNTRY ITSELF.

7. FINALLY, AS ANOTHER SIGN OF THEIR INCREASINGLY ISOLATIONIST STANCE, THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE ALBANIANS HAVE REFUSED TO RENEW THEIR FIVE-YEAR ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL AGREEMENTS WITH POLAND, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, EAST GERMANY AND BULGARIA. HE OBSERVED THAT AN ALBANIAN ECONOMIC DELEGATION HAS JUST COMPLETED TALKS IN ROME, BUT THAT THE ALBANIAN SIDE HAS EXHIBITED NO

INTEREST IN ENTERING INTO SERIOUS TALKS ON THE EXPANSION OF TRADE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL REPRESSION, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ROME01924
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760043-0436
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760283/aaaacuqy.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <10 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALBANIA
TAGS: PFOR, PINR, AL, IT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006